

May 2024

**Important information to keep your child safe:**

All schools in the UK have recently been sent information from the National Crime Agency, regarding a rise in the reporting of financially motivated sexual extortion (a type of online blackmail often known in the media as 'sextortion') and children and young people across the world are being targeted.

This frequently involves an adult (often from an organised crime group) threatening to release nude or semi-nude images and/or videos of a child or young person, unless they pay money, or meet another financial demand, such as purchasing a pre-paid gift card.

Victims of any age and gender can be targets, however a large number have involved male victims aged 14-18. A child or young person is never to blame if they have been a victim. Offenders will have tricked, groomed and/or manipulated them into sharing an image, or may even have used AI to create an image.

You can find out more about online blackmail on CEOP Education's parents and carers website at [CEOP Safety Centre](#).

**Talking to your child**

It's important to have frequent, open and non-judgemental conversations with your child about relationships, sex and being online to build trust and support them if something goes wrong. Financially motivated sexual extortion should be included in those conversations. Here are some tips about how to approach this:

**Talk to them about their life online:** Discuss the websites, Apps and games they use, and how and with whom they're spending their time online.

**Talk about where to find information about relationships and sex:** organisations like CEOP Education, Childline and Brook have age-appropriate advice topics such as sexual communication and image sharing to help talk to them.

**Review privacy settings:** talk to your child about the importance of using privacy settings on their accounts to restrict who can contact them and know how to alter these on family devices.

**Make sure they know where to go for support:** let them know that they can come to you with any concerns and won't be judged. (See links below and on the website).

**Make sure they know where to report:** remind your child how you can help them to report an incident to the police or using the CEOP Safety Centre. There is also a three-step approach to having unwanted nudes/semi-nudes removed:

1. **Use Report Remove**, a tool from Childline and the Internet Watch Foundation. Your child can use this to remove images that have been shared or might be shared.

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2. **Use Take It Down**, a tool from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Your child can use this to remove or stop the online sharing of images or videos.

3. Report directly to the platform or app that the incident has occurred on. For advice on how to report to major social media platforms, **visit Internet Matters**. To learn more about what resources are available to help you support your child, visit the UK Safer Internet Centre.

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### **What can I do if this has happened to my child?**

If your child tells you that someone is trying to trick, threaten or blackmail them online:

- **Don't pay, do stop contact and block:** you may be tempted to pay, but there is no guarantee that this will stop the threats. If you have paid, don't panic but don't pay anything more. Help your child to stop all communication with the offender and block them on any accounts that they have been contacted on.
- **Avoid deleting anything:** try not to delete anything that could be used as evidence such as messages, images, and bank account details.
- **Report to the police or CEOP:** call 101 or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm to your child. Or you can use the CEOP Safety Centre to report any online blackmail attempts.

### **Useful links – for information and/or support**

[CEOP Safety Centre](#)

[CEOP Education Toolkit for 11-18s \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](#)

[A parent's guide to privacy settings \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](#)

[Sextortion - Resources - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Register for an account \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](#)

[Online blackmail \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](#)

[Report online issues to protect your child | Internet Matters](#)

[Childline | Childline](#)

[Report Remove | Childline](#)

[Take It Down \(ncmec.org\)](#)

[Sexual Health & Wellbeing - Brook – Fighting for healthy lives](#)

[How AI is being abused to create child sexual abuse material \(CSAM\) online \(iwf.org.uk\)](#)